



## **Transportation Advisory Committee**

Date: October 12, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:40 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

### **Minutes.**

#### **1. Administration.**

Members in Attendance: Dan Amstutz (DPCD), John Aslanian, Beth Benedikt, Bill Copithorne (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis (Chair), Tycho Nightingale, Corey Rateau (APD), Scott Smith, and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Laura Swan and James Stubbe.

Members of Public in Attendance: Mary Beck, Aleece D'Onofrio (Stantec), Mona Mandal, Jo Anne Preston, Paul Schlichtman, Petru Sofio, Linda Varone, and Lena Webb.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

#### **B. Approval of September 14, 2022 Meeting Notes.**

Minutes for the Meeting of September 14, 2022 were approved.

#### **C. Correspondence sent/received between September 10 and October 6, 2022.**

1. "Comprehensive Permit Application for 1021-1027 Mass Ave", Email to TAC on behalf of the ZBA, 09/27/22.

A public hearing will be held on October 18 as part of the comprehensive permit process and 40B Law. It is likely that the hearing will be extended to November 11, 2022. A Working Group was formed to examine the Traffic Impact

Assessment of the application, which is comprised of Ray Jones, Jeff Maxtutis, and Bill Copithorne (DPW) and/or Wayne Chouinard (DPW).

2. "Intersection @ Park Ave and Route 2's Frontage Roads", Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 09/29/22.

Petru Sofio emailed the letter to the Select Board, cc'ing MassDOT, and informed TAC that there has been a reduction in the left-turn signal length from the Arlington side.

Jeff Maxtutis noted that the intersection is under MassDOT jurisdiction. Bill Copithorne and Len Diggins said the Select Board had sent a short letter to MassDOT to evaluate the intersection under its jurisdiction.

3. "Downing Square", Email from George Stephans, 09/27/22.

Jeff Maxtutis updated TAC about a request for additional signage at Downing Square, as the intersection can be confusing with some drivers unaware that northbound traffic on Park Ave does not have a stop sign.

Melissa Laube and Bill Copithorne agree about the confusion, yet are not sure about the solution (e.g., what would the additional signage say). Beth Benedikt noted that the intersection is challenging during morning rush hour: the automobile queue on Park Ave Ext can back up a significant distance towards Summer St. In addition, there are more automobiles moving through Downing Square with the opening of the new development there. Scott Smith suggested signs with "Traffic from [direction] Does Not Stop".

Beth Benedikt, Ray Jones, and Melissa Laube volunteered to form a Working Group. Len Diggins asked the Working Group to consider broadly what could the Town do to improve the intersection.

4. "Yellow lines on Westminster", Email from Alisa Pascale, 09/28/22

Discussed in Section 9.

**2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).**

There were no public comments.

**3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).**

**A. Bill Copithorne provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW).**

The construction season will be closing soon. Paving and sidewalk work have been completed. Supply constraints on granite curbs might push some projects

to spring for completion (e.g., Everett St and side streets in the Thompson School neighborhood, and Newland Rd in the Peirce School neighborhood).

Pavement markings are now finished on River St, Bates Rd, Lowell St, Westminster Ave. Pavement markings for Lake St were partially done; the contractor will return to complete the remaining section. Pavement markings for Medford St are pending guidance on how to stripe bike lanes.

**B. Dan Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).**

An in-person public meeting on Mass Ave/Appleton St will be held October 18 at 7pm in Town Hall. Stantec, the consultant for the project, will be there for the presentation and discussion.

Dan Amstutz will be presenting on October 19 at the Streetwise Speaker Series at Aeronaut Brewing to discuss some of the projects in Arlington.

RFP will be coming out next week for the update of the Complete Streets prioritization plan with MAPC.

Moving Together MassDOT Conference will be held on November 1. This conference focuses on alternative transportation (pedestrians and bicyclists).

**C. Corey Rateau provided an update from the Police Department (APD).**

Corey Rateau attended the New England Transportation Safety Conference (Portland, ME) earlier in the month.

APD had a meeting with Dallin School on changes in signage and adjacent School Zone signage. APD is working with DPW on adding a crosswalk at Renfrew St

APD revisited the area around the Rawson Rd and Warren St intersection. Corey Rateau observed that many signs are already in place; and a stop line is painted. He added that no crashes have been reported in more than 3 years.

There continues to-be a shortage of traffic supervisors.

**4. Update: Chestnut St**

Aleece D'Onofrio of Stantec presented on Stantec's evaluation and design of Chestnut St between its intersection with Mystic St and Medford St / Warren St. The main focus of the project is the midblock redesign based on TAC-recommended safety improvements of the crossing of Chestnut St at Chestnut Terr, which was approved by the Select Board in June, 2021. The Town has

since received a Shared Streets Grant from MassDOT (approximately \$143,000) to implement these changes by December, 2023.

In assessing midblock changes, Stantec also considered possible future improvements to the intersections (of Mystic St and Medford St / Warren St). Land surveys and traffic data were conducted of the entire area. Corey Rateau asked if traffic data included speed, volume, and classification; Scott Smith noted that traffic counts for the Medford St to Warren St movement were not listed in the presentation. Aleece D'Onofrio responded that she will look into what data were collected.

Intersection redesign: Traffic data showed that the left turn from Chestnut St to Mystic St is the prime movement. Automobile queues waiting at the intersection signal can extend past Chestnut Terr. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are limited; parking can conflict with the queue.

Aleece D'Onofrio presented two possible alternatives for future improvements to the Mystic St / Chestnut St intersection. In both alternatives, the existing slip lanes were removed. The intersection was tightened or realigned to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, while not impeding truck movements. (Chestnut St is Route 60, a designated truck route.) Signal timing will be changed to accommodate the different traffic patterns and movements.

Scott Smith commented that Chestnut St parking is not heavy except for events parking needs. He suggested that the cycle track be placed on the northside of Chestnut St to direct towards the Minuteman Bikeway. Dan Amstutz concurred that the bike lanes should connect to the Minuteman Bikeway, and he questioned whether two travel lanes on Mystic St from Mass Ave are necessary. Ray Jones added that there is a high volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and the intersections will need crosswalks in all directions to permit flow.

Petru Sofio expressed his support in realigning the intersection.

Paul Schlichtman asked about redesigning the Chestnut St and Medford St / Warren St intersection. Jo Anne Preston added that this is a dangerous intersection for pedestrians to cross. Linda Varone, a resident of Chestnut Manor on Chestnut Terr, agreed about the danger of the intersections. She and Paul Schlichtman noted that the automobiles parking east of Chestnut Terr hinder visibility of the crosswalk making it more difficult to cross Chestnut St. Pedestrian flashing beacon would be helpful.

Paul Schlichtman commented that the Chestnut St westbound lane is much wider than the eastbound lane, which might contribute to higher vehicle speed. Dan Amstutz and Bill Copithorne responded that the Chestnut St westbound-lane width is needed to accommodate the vehicle queue at the traffic light.

Mona Mandel, Precinct 9 Town Meeting Member, expressed concern on the slow pace of action in this area. She asked whether pedestrian and bicycle movements were counted and considered, and if observations and data

collection were made on weekends. Aleece D'Onofrio responded that observations were made at different times including weekends, which included pedestrians and cyclists.

Midblock redesign: Stantec reviewed the Select Board-approved TAC recommendations. The working assumption was a street width of 50', however, the land survey measured a cross section of 49'. The sidewalk width will not be reduced, and the existing curbs will be maintained at the present location. The curb-to-curb cross section will be: 7' parking; 1.5' buffer; 5' bike lane; 11' travel lane. The 11' travel lane is maintained due to the presence of large vehicles on this designated truck route. TAC-proposed 5' center islands cannot fit in the existing geometry; these will be replaced with bump outs for traffic calming and to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance. RRFB will be installed to enhance crosswalk visibility.

Ray Jones asked if designers considered removing parking to get more space. Lena Webb said that preserving parking creates conflict between pedestrians and bicyclists; remove parking to make the area safe for pedestrians and cyclists. Aleece D'Onofrio and Dan Amstutz responded that different configurations were examined including the funding available in order to assess what changes might be permissible. The Select Board-approved plan did not remove parking; changes to parking will require more outreach and discussion on special events.

Petru Sofio expressed concern on the door-zone bike lane having a 1.5' buffer. He suggested (1) removing the northside bike lane to provide a 3' buffer on the southside bike lane, and (2) extending the bike lane at least to Warren St to connect to the soon-to-be-striped Medford St bike lane. Aleece D'Onofrio responded that Stantec will examine extending bike lanes and pavement marking beyond the study area.

Scott Smith said that bike lanes will be an improvement from the present with a connection to the Medford rotary. He summarized that the midblock redesign is overall helpful to pedestrians, and the Town should consider flashing beacons at both crosswalks.

Paul Schlichtman asked for RRFB to-be installed as soon as possible, as well as addressing the poor condition of the sidewalks.

Next steps. Aleece D'Onofrio concluded by providing an outline of the next steps. Stantec will prepare and finalize the construction document, which will be ready in the next four weeks. In early December, the project can be put out to bid for construction starting in spring, 2023. The Shared Streets Grant needs to-be spent by December, 2023. Dan Amstutz added that this project qualifies for funding from the Parking Benefits District. Approximately \$50,000 is available, if necessary for construction costs.

**5. Vote: Parking space on Mass Ave at Town Hall Crosswalk**

Shoji Takahashi summarized the recommendation of the Memo on removing a parking spot on Mass Ave. TAC voted unanimously to send the Memo to the Select Board.

**6. Vote: Overlook Rd Traffic Calming**

Shoji Takahashi summarized the Memo on Overlook Rd Traffic Calming. Based on the traffic data collected, no actions are recommended at this time. Corey Rateau confirmed that the data do not support that there is speeding in that location. TAC voted unanimously to send the Memo to the Select Board.

**7. Vote: Summer St/Sunset Rd Crosswalk**

Shoji Takahashi summarized the recommendation of the Memo installing a crosswalk on Summer St near the intersection of Sunset Rd.

Beth Benedikt, who lives in the area, said that she does not see a downside to adding a crosswalk. Dan Amstutz added that the Newland Rd entrance of Peirce School is where students arrive; crossing Summer St near Sunset Rd is a desire line.

In response to a question from Jeff Maxtutis, the sight distance to the proposed crosswalk location for westbound drivers is more than 350'. This information will be added to the Analysis & Recommendation section.

TAC voted 6 – 2 to send the Memo to the Select Board. Those in favor were Dan Amstutz, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Scott Smith, and Shoji Takahashi. Those opposed were Bill Copithorne and Corey Rateau.

**8. Vote: Arlington High School (AHS)**

Scott Smith summarized the Memo, which addressed three different issues.

(1) A traffic signal will be installed at Mill St and Millbrook Dr: Working Group recommends installing “Do Not Block Intersection” signs and appropriate pavement markings. It is not clear what future traffic patterns might be on completion of the new building; consider coordination of the new traffic signal with the signal at Mass Ave and Mill St.

(2) signalized pedestrian crosswalk on Mass Ave in front of AHS. Install flex posts or similar near the crosswalk as automobiles are parking too close to the crosswalk, impeding visibility of pedestrians and movement of cyclists. The pedestrian phase needs to increase to 17 seconds as it is too short and does not conform with MUTCD.

(3) bike parking. Scott Smith observed 72 bikes parked at AHS on one morning; however, there are only 60 bike spaces. The Town has ordered additional bike racks, which will be installed.

Mona Madal voiced her support for bicycling to AHS and the need for additional bike parking. She noted that students are leaning bikes along the built-in benches, which has resulted in bicycle theft.

TAC voted unanimously to send the Memo to the Select Board.

#### **9. Discussion: Mt Gilboa Traffic Calming**

Ray Jones updated TAC that the speed feedback sign on Lowell St appears to be working. TAC received correspondence on the striping of a double yellow line on Westminster Ave from Downing Square to Westmoreland Ave, which residents think may lead to drivers speeding.

Bill Copithorne confirmed that the speed feedback sign should be working and that stop bars have been painted at the intersection of Westminster Ave and Westmoreland Ave. He added that he is not aware of DPW being contacted about the striping of the double-yellow line Westminster Ave.

In response to a question from Jeff Maxtutis, Ray Jones said that he will be conducting stop-compliance observations now that stop bars have been painted.

#### **10. Discussion: Franklin St/Lewis Ave/Philips St**

Bill Copithorne described the location as a wide and open intersection. DPW is considering narrowing the intersection with consistent turn radii. The plan will be presented at the next meeting. Wayne Chouinard also would like to discuss redesigns of other intersections for evaluation by TAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.